

List f Awstralije.

**Wot Michala Szwory f Droždžija,
bratra Jana Szwory, kiž je w awguŝi 1851 f
nuohimi Szerbami do Awstralije wuczahnył.**

**Point Henry, 1. junija 1851. — Luboŝ
naŝeho knesa a ŝbóžnika Jezom Khrysta budź
f Wami. Hamen!**

*The introduction and first part of Michael Zwar's
1851 letter as published in the Wendish Newspaper,
"Tydsenske Nowiny".*

Point Henry, June 1, 1851

The love of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ be with you. Amen

Dear loved mother, brothers and sisters! Should these lines find you alive and well, I would indeed be most pleased. My love for you urges me again to pick up my pen and to visit you by means of a letter. Thanks be to God that I am healthy and in good spirits so that I must daily say with David "Lord, I am not worthy of all the faithfulness and mercy which daily show me." My dear ones, I feel that you must have become very impatient with me because you had to wait so long for my first letter. However I assure you that this was caused by certain difficulties and not through any fault of mine. So don't think that I have forgotten you. I can honestly say that no day has passed without me thinking of you and I shall not forget you whether things go well or badly with me. I desire nothing more than to see my homeland once more.

Dear brother Johann, from your written remarks I can see how bad things are in Germany. That's sad! But dear brother, don't imagine that you will find conditions so much better elsewhere. You will of course know that in all

English colonies religious freedom prevails and that the schools are run independent of the church. NO one is compelled to attend school. It is immaterial (to the authorities) whether parents send their children to school or not.

There is always something unpleasant to be found, go where one will. Even if one went to Jerusalem there would be things not to our liking.

Dear Sister Maria! I received your letter right on my birthday. I was very happy to receive it and thank you sincerely that you remembered. You wrote that you dreamt about me on August 15, 1850. Just at that time I had such worries that I could not sleep. I had been working for an Englishman who wanted to cheat me of £10.0.0 sterling, that is 66 thaler and 16 silver groschen. He had written a receipt and although I did not understand what it was, yet I signed that statement saying that I had already been paid. With God's help I did deceive £7.0.0 stg. but I was cheated out oh £3.0.0 stg. (20 taler) . Out here one has to watch carefully that one is not deceived. Until a man knows English he has to pay education fees, meaning, he. has to let others take unfair advantage of him.

Dear brother Johann! Your writings reached me only on April 25. I thank you most heartily for the same. Dear brother, s I learnt from your letter, you wish to leave your native land. I cannot out of hand advise you against this step, but you must consider whether you have good reason for going or not.

And now, my dearest mother! Should it be in any way possible to live in the fatherland, that would be better than to migrate. For such a journey is made difficult by more things than just ordinary cares. Dearest mother, you have now reached an age where you should not accept such hardships. It's hard enough for a younger person. Yet I would not entirely advise against it. My dear ones, I have put the case in this way because it is not good to advise someone to migrate especially later it does not go so well with him. How much one has to put up with after having encouraged someone, and then he is not happy here. Höhne has amongst other things stated that an evil spirit must have come over people to induce them to migrate.

A brief description of the country. Australia is divided into three dukedoms. They are called 1. Port Jackson or Sidney; 2. Port Adelaide and 3. Port Philipp. The capital city of the last-named is Melbourne. It is a fairly large city of 25,000 inhabitants and 13 churches. On its eastern boundary flows the River Jarajara, which provides the city and surroundings with water. Building allotments are quite expensive. In Elizabeth Street a building site was sold for £43.0.0 stg. a foot [more than 280 taler]. This is definitely the most prominent city, with nothing but large stores and warehouses. In this city you will also find more than 200 hotels, (I don't know whether there as many houses in the whole of Weissenberg) . Those who wish to conduct a hotel must secure a permit. [English licence is pronounced: lajsens]. For such a licence the proprietor annually has to pay between £100.0.0 and £200.0.0 stg [£1.0.0 equals about 6 taler and 25 new silver groschen) . This licence is granted the owner and not to the establishment. If the hotel keeper breaks the law his licence is cancelled and he can no longer operate as such.

Sunday is observed very strictly here, as in all English countries. No hotel may open. No one is allowed to work on Sunday. Also no steamships run on that day. However drinking goes on merrily in this country with the women being worse almost than the men. Everyone found lying intoxicated on the streets is placed in

the lock-up for 24 hours and fined 5 shillings [1 taler and 20 new silver groschen]. In case he is not able to pay, he must spend a day cracking stones. Liquor is very dear out here. A can of whiskey costs £1.0.0, a can of beer 7 new silver groschen and 2 new pfennig. It's rather powerful beer and whoever drinks a can is near enough to being drunk.

On Sundays three services are held in every church. Also the more prominent people do not allow a single Sunday to pass without attending worship. The Germans have been granted the use of an English church, where they may conduct services between 3.00 pm and 5.00 pm. There are over 800 Germans here, but only about 30 attend the services. In addition, they cannot reach agreement as to whether they should form a Lutheran congregation here. So far they have no pastor. However a barber from Berlin reads a sermon. In 1850 we Lutherans here had a meeting in an English church to consider a letter to be sent to Germany with a request that a pastor be sent to us. A great many attended this meeting. After it was decided to form a Lutheran congregation here, the discussion turned to the type of church it should be. Some did not wish the congregation to be called any thing in particular. Others wished it to be Evangelical Lutheran in character while a third group demanded that it be a union church and that a preacher be procured through the Berlin Consistory. With that such a dispute arose that finally no one knew what he really wanted. If this had not taken place in a church, they certainly would have come to blows, so that every back would have started to smoke. Because of this no finality was reached.

Various nationalities have settled here, so we find various religions. Just at present a new sect has made its appearance. Its members call themselves holy prophets. They will not allow their hair or beards to be cut and look like savages. They are everywhere and preach every Sunday under the open sky and prophesy that the end of the world and the final judgment will take place in 1866, although they have no proof for their assertions. So far they have no church of their own, yet they try to get everyone to accept their silly beliefs. Catholics there are in great numbers, mainly Irish.

The bush. If someone has work outside of the cities, he is said to be in the bush. When there is not work in the city it is an advantage to be in the bush. If you want to save money it is best if you stay in the bush. All Germans whether officials, merchants or clerks must take up shepherding sheep, exchanging ink for sweat and the pen for a shepherd's crook. I advise those in such occupations to remain in Germany. A shepherd's life out here is only half a life, for a shepherd sees no other human being from one year's end to the next. Each one constantly has 1500 to 2500 sheep to graze and right through the year receives a weekly ration of 12 lb of meat, 10 lb of flour, 2 lb of sugar and half a lb of tea. The sheep are kept out in the open right through the year. On some properties 100,000 are grazed. They still bring in better returns than any other undertaking. A shepherd receives an annual pay of between \$20.0.0 and \$24.0.0 stg. Unfortunately, after receiving his pay he mostly comes into town and after some days has spent his money and then

returns to the bush. With it all the shepherds are so poor that they cannot even buy a pipeful of tobacco. Sheep are shorn here in September and October. Men attend to this work. Each man shears between 80 and 120 sheep a day; for each 100 he receives 4 taler and 20 new groschen (about £ 0.13.6).

Cattle here run more or less wild out in the bush. The stockmen use horses and handle herds of between 500 and 800 head. The calves suck until the cow has another calf. Every beast has the owner's name, mostly two letters, branded on its ribs. Horses bring various prices; a good five year old brings £11, £15 or even £20 stg. Hacks are cheaper and one can say that here every son of a beggar goes about on horseback. I have seen on numerous occasions how a man, his wife and child were seated on one horse and cantering at that. The English people certainly are crazy.

As far as water is concerned the country here has little. At times it has to be carted from 15 to 20 miles away. Because of that, water is dearer here than beer in Germany. When a well is dug, only useless brackish water is found. So where possible rainwater has to be collected. The so-called rainy season or Winter lasts four months, from May to August, during which time it rains nearly every day. During Summer there is practically no rainfall and all the pastures are dry. Because of that, extreme care needs to be taken with fire so that the grass is not set alight for grass as dry as that burns like gunpowder and firs rage for miles.

Agriculture. The plowing and seeding is done in May and June and the harvesting in January. All field work is done differently here from the way I learnt it at home. Here the plowing is done with two or three yoke of oxen, yes, I have seen six yoke used. No reins are used. One person drives the plough and two drive the oxen and it is done so roughly that one is in danger of losing the bowels out of one's abdomen. Otherwise crops grow well and the soil is mostly black loam. Here only half as much seed is sown to the acre as with you. Rye does not grow here but wheat is sown. Wheat is very dear this year.

The food here is the same for the upper class as for the poor. For breakfast, meat, wheaten bread and tea; at midday, meat and cooked vegetables; in the evening, meat, bread and tea. The English settlers eat their meat half cooked, so that the blood can still be seen. Despite all this meat, I still at first went hungry but now I eat it whether rare or well done.

Prices for various goods. A one pound loaf costs 3 silver groschen, a pound (half a can) of butter¹², and a pound of tea 14 new silver groschen, a pound of potatoes 9 new pfennig, a pound of apples 3 new silver groschen and two new pfennig, a pound of grapes 5 new silver groschen, a pound of onions 1 new silver groschen and 3 new pfennig, a pound of sugar 2 new silver groschen and 6 new pfennig, a pound of dripping 2 new silver groschen and six new pfennig, a pound of candles 4 new silver groschen and 5 new pfennig. Tobacco is very dear, 2 taler and five

new silver groschen, a cigar 1 new silver groschen and three new pfennig. A straw hat costs 1 taler and 20 to 25 new silver groschen, a black silk hat 2 taler and 20 new silver groschen, a silk neck-tie one taler, a waistcoat 25 new silver groschen, thick work trousers 2 taler, a cotton undershirt 25 new silver groschen, a cotton shirt 1 taler and 20 new silver groschen, a pair of socks 6 new silver groschen, a pair of boots 8 taler and 10 new silver groschen, a pair of shoes 4 taler and 10 silver groschen, and I tell you, they wear well.

Wages. A worker receives 1 taler 20 new silver groschen daily, but for that he must work from 6 am to 6 pm. A washerwoman receives 25 new silver groschen. A workman receiving full board is paid from 2 taler and 10 new silver groschen to 3 taler and 20 new silver groschen weekly. A girl can earn from £12 to £16 annually. What a tradesman is paid I do not know. Tailors do not do well here as one can buy garments in the shops cheaper than a tailor can make them. Carpenters earn two taler and 20 new silver groschen daily. There are no trade unions here so everyone can work as he pleases. Boot making is a good trade. Winegrowers are much sought after and are paid £30 annually but one has to be able to speak English here. English is most important. He who knows English will manage.

Land prices are high. Near the coast it is dear. I bought a half acre, 15 minutes (one mile) from Melbourne and paid £20 stg (125 Taler) for it. I bought it because of bricks and should I remain well, I will start a brickworks next year. I am well experienced in this work and I hope to earn £1 stg. weekly beside my keep. After 3 or 4 hours (12-16 miles) from the city land is cheaper, perhaps £3 pounds or less per acre. There are no barns here. The crop is carted together to form haystacks and is also threshed out in the fields.

Speaking of the aborigines who were here before the first Europeans arrived, there are still many throughout the land. They are not educated and are little better than dumb cattle. They have no desire to work, also they have no houses but sleep under branches which they have cut from trees. They hate the Europeans and claim that they brought the cold conditions into the country as it was not so cold previously. They have no idols. They only worship the moon and at full moon they dance and sing all night and make a frightful noise. Their main weapon, which is unusual in shape, they always carry with them and they are expert in throwing it. They are terrified by our guns and pistols. When someone comes along with a gun they do a very quick getaway.

I must not forget to mention that we see the sun about ten and a half hours earlier than you do. When it is 10.30 am here it is midnight with you.

I am presently 60 miles from Melbourne, out in the bush, where there is nothing to see except the blue sky and endless gum trees. I am busy plowing and must cultivate 300 acres. My boss is very good. I worked together with Andrew Kaiser for 2 months but we are now 70 miles apart. I regard him as a true blood brother, for in my illness he looked after me better than I asked. I could not walk so he

led me about and stayed by my side on many a night to care for me without getting any sleep. God reward him for this. I will never forget what he did for me. There is nothing worse in all the world than to take sick on board ship, for there one is completely forsaken. I had a very high temperature during my illness but because of the scarcity of water I had to endure a terrible thirst. Besides that, the water stank so badly that I had to hold my nose when I wanted to drink. How uncomfortable it is for anyone to be sick on board a ship. The din made by one's fellow passengers is almost unbearable.

Gold, Gold. That is the cry presently heard throughout Australia and sure enough gold was really found in Port Jackson, 90 miles from Sydney and 450 from Melbourne. This discovery was made on May 20th, the gold lying about half a metre below the surface. In less than 3 days two men found 16 lot (about 8 ounces) and were paid £55 for it.

Now everyone is chasing to the area and already there are more than 3,600 men looking for gold there. Everyone who wants to dig for gold must secure a permit [English: licence] from the government. this costs 30 shillings or 10 taler. The goldfield is about two miles wide on the banks of a small stream. The people there have to sleep out in the open because there are no houses. One can imagine what they have to put up with in the rainy season which is now on. One man searching for gold wrote to a Sydney paper: "My dear folk, stay at your work and don't forget to sow wheat so that we may all have something to eat. For it is better to have something to eat than with all this gold to die of starvation. Always keep in mind the terrible conditions under which the men live on the diggings. They are soaked every night because they have no shelter, and when the sun begins to shine the steam rises from them like a cloud." Bread has already risen steeply in price. A 4 pound loaf costs 2 taler and 20 new silver groschen out there. In Melbourne the price used to be 1 silver new groschen and 3 pfennig for a 1 pound loaf, but now it has risen to almost double that amount.

I must remind you that a certain Mr. Schmidt of Lobau has left for home.

Just as I was about to conclude this letter I received a note from Johann Ponicke of Melbourne in which he informs me that his sister had written that he should sell what he has and return home if things are so bad in Australia. But that is ridiculous, because one would need a loaf of stuff to realize enough for a trip back to Europe. From here to London costs £24 stg. (163 taler). So I don't think Ponich will make the move.

One at first expects everything in Australia to be easier than it actually is. On the voyage out I didn't worry about learning English, though I had books and time enough. I learnt nothing so that when I stepped ashore I didn't understand even 'yes' or 'no'. Dear brothers! Don't think that coming to a new country is a simple

matter. Imagine landing among a foreign people where one understands not a word. It often happened that I said 'yes' when I should have said 'no', and when they called me for meals, I had no idea what they meant. Added to that I had a senseless boss so that it seemed I had exchanged my homeland for hell. Had I at the time written home my compatriots would surely have been afraid to come to Australia. Hoehne complains so loudly about everything that even the dogs want to get away from him.

Well, these are the main things I wanted to write about. I hope to see you all in 3 or 4 years when I return to the Fatherland, should God grant me his favour to this end. I will not return to settle in Germany, but will undertake the voyage simply out of love for you all. I do not want to become rich. As long as I can pay my way honestly I will be satisfied.

Ny dear Brothers! Should the fatherland be visited by troubled times, then come out to me. If on the other hand times are peaceful and you can live on what you earn, then stay at home. That would be better and you would have less troubled life. I leave it to you, I will neither encourage nor discourage anyone.

Give my best wishes to the Kaisers and tell them that Andreas is well and in good spirits. It is his opinion that his father should not come out if he can manage to get along somehow at home. I will meet up with Andreas again in September.

Best wishes to schoolmaster Forster and all my old schoolmates, as well as to all other acquaintances and friends.

May all go well with you, dear mother, dear brothers and dear sister and all in our relationship. I commend you all to our Lord Jesus Christ and remain

Your truest son, brother and brother-in-law

Michael Zwar

**Міцкіе ёо дэрје, луба маці, лубі братсія а
луба ёотра а зыле пшчэцзельство. За поручам
Ваß вшчлїч нафхему kneу Јесуßeј Кхрыстуßeј
а јавофтам **Вафч**
најшвјернїшї ѕон, брате а ѕват
Мїчал Сэвора.**

The end of Michael Zwar's 1851 letter as published in the Wendish Newspaper, "Tydsenske Nowiny".